

SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Bi-Monthly News Publication

COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION • 345 EAST 46 ST. NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

VOL. V, NO. 6

December, 1957

NATIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE ON CAREERS IN SOCIAL WORK

The Council on Social Work Education is pleased to announce the formation of a National Citizens Committee on Careers in Social Work.

Mr. Sidney Hollander, past president of the National Social Welfare Assembly, has been appointed chairman. In accepting the chairmanship of the committee, Mr. Hollander stated that in his opinion "the shortage of social workers is the single most critical problem facing the field and because this shortage so seriously affects the extent and quality of the services available to people I am glad to do whatever I can in helping to find a solution to the problem."

The continuing acute shortage of social workers to staff social services has enlisted the interest of other outstanding business and professional men and women throughout the country for service on the committee. Like Mr. Hollander, they are themselves serving on the boards of social agencies in many cities and personally know the serious consequences of the shortage of social workers.

Miss Jane M. Hoey, CSWE President, stated that "the Committee's chief function will be to help the Council explain the career opportunities for young men and women in the field of social work. I am firmly convinced that there are many young men and women who would find real satisfaction in social work if they knew more about its nature and the opportunities it offers. These are the young men and women whom we must reach through their schools, their churches and their homes if we are ever to recruit the 15,000 to 20,000 persons needed to staff current vacancies."

Other major functions of the National Citizens Committee on Careers in Social Work are:

To study the shortage of social work personnel and to assess the consequences of this shortage in terms of services to people and in the efficient use of both tax and voluntary funds made available for social services;

To help the Council find the financial resources needed to carry on an effective national recruitment effort.

(Continued on page 2, col. 1)

"SO WHAT?"

Progress Report on the Survey of Consequences of the Shortage of Qualified Social Workers

by

Alex Rosen

Former CSWE Consultant on Recruitment; Chairman, Committee on Careers in Social Work, CSWE.

This report has an unusual, perhaps impertinent title, which deserves explanation. During the first phase of the Council on Social Work Education's Accelerated Recruitment Program (see *Social Work Education*, Vol. V, No. 2, p. 3) visits were made to individuals active in civic, communal, university and foundation endeavors. We tried to learn from their recruitment experiences and to acquaint them with our efforts. Generally speaking, the response of most of these people was warm and cooperative. However, there was detectable, sometimes in a direct phrase, sometimes in a question, the opinion that the personnel shortage in social work was one of purely professional and agency concern. One foundation official was quite blunt. He wanted to know whether the shortage was really affecting the communal welfare and whether we really had any objective data regarding the consequences of the shortage. Looking directly at the Council representative, after learning of the personnel shortage in social work, he asked, "So what?"

While such questions are, at the moment, somewhat disconcerting, they are perfectly proper and serve a positive purpose. First, social work is a community supported endeavor and as a profession is responsible to the community at large. We are not private entrepreneurs accountable only to ourselves. Second, it is one thing to make an assertion based on impressions, quite another to provide objective documentation for one's statements.

This very legitimate challenge led to a more systematic study of the consequences of the personnel shortage. We had had hunches and impressions which we believed to be fairly valid before. Now we wanted more objective, more systematic documentation.

The Survey

We prepared a simple questionnaire and mailed it to most of the national social work agencies, to several representative councils of social agencies (so that we

(Continued on page 2, col. 1)

SIXTH ANNUAL PROGRAM MEETING - HOTEL STATLER - DETROIT, MICHIGAN
January 29 - February 1, 1958.
MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY!

NATIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE

(Continued from page 1)

The membership of the Committee follows:

Sidney Hollander, Chairman, trustee of the Maryland Department of Welfare, member of the National Budget Committee, board member of Family Service Association of America and National Urban League; Mrs. Leonard H. Bernheim, Chairman, Social Work Recruiting Committee of Greater New York; Philip Bernstein, Executive Director, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds; Mrs. Fred Brown, National Council of Jewish Women; Vincent B. Coffin, Senior Vice-President, Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company; Jack Conway, Administrative Assistant to the President, International Union, United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, Detroit; Edward H. deConingh, President, Mueller Electric Company of Cleveland; Mrs. Randolph Guggenheimer, President, Day Care Council of New York; Mrs. Harold D. Harvey, Chairman, Social Welfare Aide Service, New York Chapter, American Red Cross; Frank J. Hertel, General Director, Community Service Society of New York; Miss Margaret A. Hickey, Public Affairs Editor, *Ladies Home Journal*, Philadelphia; Miss Loula D. Lasker, Founder and Honorary Chairman of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council of New York; John Moore of New York; Lee H. Morrill, Assistant Treasurer, Union Trust Company of Springfield, Mass.; Robert H. Mulreany, senior partner in De Forest, Elder, and Mulreany and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the New York School of Social Work; Stanley Myers of Myers, Heiman and Kaplan of Miami; Miss Dorothy Rackemann, former Junior League Chairman of Boston; Joseph H. Reid, Executive Director, Child Welfare League of America; Mrs. Arthur C. Reilly, National Council of Catholic Women; Donald S. Stralem of Hallgarten and Co., New York; Dr. Ellen Winston, Commissioner of the North Carolina State Board of Public Welfare; and Miss Ethel H. Wise, President, Lavanburg Corner House Fund, New York.

The first meeting of the newly organized Committee was held on November 1 at 345 East 46th Street with 12 members in attendance in addition to Miss Hoey, Mr. Witte and Miss Neely of Council staff, and Mr. Alex Rosen. The Committee received considerable publicity in the news section of the Sunday edition of the *New York Times* on November 24.

"SO WHAT?"

(Continued from page 1)

could get the impact of the shortage on a local community), to our pilot centers in Boston, Cleveland, New York and Pittsburgh, and to the 48 members of the Council's Committee on Careers in Social Work, who represent a cross section of national and local agency personnel, as well as school of social work personnel.

The results were surprising, almost shocking—much more so than had been anticipated. As returns came in from our respondents in local and national agencies in different parts of the country, we learned that the shortage of qualified social work personnel was having a most serious effect on the happiness and personal welfare of many people. These were people whose problems and difficulties had brought them to mental health clinics, child welfare agencies, community centers, family courts

or hospitals seeking help. The shortage was affecting much more than the profession itself.

The Findings

The findings on the consequences of the shortage seem to fall rather naturally under two main headings:

- I. Effect of the Personnel Shortage on the Welfare of the Client.
- II. Effect of the Personnel Shortage on Personnel Standards and Agency Efficiency and Effectiveness.

Obviously, these aspects impinge on one another and are mutually interdependent. However, it is often helpful for purposes of analysis and clarity to look at each aspect separately.

I. EFFECT OF THE PERSONNEL SHORTAGE ON THE WELFARE OF THE CLIENT.

There can be no question that the effect on the client is of most importance. The profession and the agencies exist solely to provide service to the client. A profession should not but can lapse into narrow institutional and parochial self-concerns if it forgets its basic responsibility to those whom it serves.

What, then, has been the impact on the client? One national mental health agency wrote us: "In attacking mental illness, there is general agreement that shortage of psychiatric personnel (including psychiatric social workers) is a major obstacle to returning more patients to the community." A similar observation was made by Mike Gorman, Director of the National Committee for Mental Health, in his testimony to a Senate Subcommittee in May of 1952. The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education stated in its annual report that with a better supply of professionally educated people a large share of mentally ill could be returned to the community to lead productive lives.

It is only in human values, not in dollars and cents, that the difference between an institutionalized individual and the same individual returned to home, family and friends can be measured.

A veterans hospital wrote that, because of the shortage, there has been a reduction in frequency of visits to veterans on leave from psychiatric hospitals; and there is more restrictive ward coverage in hospitals.

A public agency stated that some of the children under care had not been visited by a worker in a year. It believed that if the agency were more adequately staffed, children in temporary homes or shelters could be placed in foster home care or for adoption, thus reducing the tax cost.

Several family welfare agencies indicated that they have had to establish waiting lists, with consequent harm to families applying for counseling and other forms of assistance.

An agency active in the field of juvenile delinquency wrote that understaffing has reduced the quality and quantity of many departments' work to the "point where their programs constitute an absolute menace to the public and make a mockery of probation and parole. The statement goes on to say that, if probation and parole are so weakened in a community, our precious system of individualized justice is in jeopardy.

A council of community agencies, reporting on the situation in its local community, gives startling evidence



the "H
execu

Th
fus
lac
cov
abl
qua
ly
leg
en
AD
wh
so
for
se
m
th
ad
sc
m
st

It se
senta
ciple
the p
ous
Boar
staff
to l
staff

II. M
M
M

This
phra
pers
when
mer
ern

V
n
p
a
a
c
S
V
c
n
f
i

It is
are
pay

One
to d
qua
son
dis
thu

To
cte
lea

the "human" cost to children and families. The council executive wrote to us as follows:

The public agency in our community has had to refuse 'service' in child welfare cases because of lack of staff. There are instances of the juvenile court not pressing neglect charges because of inability to service the case. . . We feel that lack of qualified personnel is one of the facts which underly the public reaction we had, in the last state legislature, to illegitimacy in ADC (Aid to Dependent Children) cases. Cases are being carried on ADC where home conditions are not conducive to wholesome development of children. Qualified personnel is not available for the evaluation needed for aggressive action in such cases. There is a serious lack of foster homes for use of the Department of Public Welfare and the Juvenile Court. Although we do not have all the money we need for adequate foster home programs in this community some of the agencies are not able to spend the money they do have because of lack of qualified staff.

It seems clear therefore, from our limited but representative sample of respondents, that the client, the recipient of our services, has been adversely affected by the personnel shortage. This has been much more serious than many careful observers had anticipated. Boards of Directors of social agencies and professional staff may well examine their own services and program to learn whether the shortage of adequately educated staff has impaired their agency effectiveness.

II. EFFECT OF THE PERSONNEL SHORTAGE ON PERSONNEL STANDARDS AND AGENCY EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS.

This section might be entitled "checker game" for this phrase is now being used to describe one effect of the personnel shortage. Agencies report that quite often when they do succeed in filling a staff vacancy, they merely create a vacancy in another agency. One southern community executive reports:

We tend to play a game of checkers in this community with social workers—shifting the local supply from one agency to the other. Recently we had a family court established here. The judge wanted a social worker on his staff. He attempted to recruit the director of the Social Child Welfare Services Division of the Department of Public Welfare. One of the supervisors from the welfare department has just shifted to another agency, with no replacement. In other words, when a position is filled in one agency, it usually creates a vacancy in another agency.

It is obvious that unless we recruit more effectively, we are forced to the exigency of borrowing from Peter to pay Paul.

One reporting agency used the phrase "inverted spiral" to describe the negative consequences of the shortage of qualified staff. This particular agency stated that personnel standards deteriorate, professional staff becomes discouraged, staff turnover increases and the shortage thus becomes even more aggravated.

To illustrate this process, several family welfare agencies reported that it was necessary to increase the caseload of each worker considerably because of shortage of

requisite number of workers. The caseload was too large to be carried effectively, and many workers consequently felt their efforts were becoming diffuse and ineffective. A greater load was thus placed on the supervisors, who found themselves too overwhelmed by the magnitude of the caseloads to do an intensive job. Several workers resigned rather than work under such difficult and unsatisfying conditions.

Many agencies, in both casework and group work services, reported that the quality of program becomes "thin" when a disproportionate number of untrained, part-time, and overloaded staff begin to prevail in the agency.

Even agencies which depend upon the work of volunteers in their direct program efforts report adverse circumstances. One national social group work agency reports that it depends upon professional staff to train and administer the work of volunteers. Thus failure to fill a position has an adverse effect on membership and program. "Some councils have found it necessary to disband day-camp programs, curtail the volunteer training programs, or discontinue efforts to organize groups in certain areas. Generally, the lack of qualified staff has meant a deterioration in program, unusual turnover among group leaders and membership loss."

A similar type of organization, dealing with youth programs and services, reports its frustrating inability to take advantage of new opportunities for service. Some communities had sought to organize new centers but actually were discouraged from doing so by the national agency involved because it was felt that adequate staff was not available to man the projected new facility. This agency states that some centers have had to postpone extension of their work into suburban or neighboring communities.

In the past, the time-honored reason for an agency being unable to undertake a particular program was the absence of funds. Evidently this is no longer true in all cases for one youth serving agency, after much effort and planning, secured a foundation grant for a program with "hard-to-reach" youth. The program has not as yet been initiated because of dearth of qualified staff.

This illustrates a basic point. Some people think that the only measurement for the personnel shortage is the number of unfilled jobs. This is at best a half truth. Because agencies and communities often do not begin to expand a program because of the lack of qualified personnel, the vacancy "dies" aborning, in the planning stages. A director of a council of social agencies describes a situation in his community, which is typical of many other communities as well. He writes as follows:

We feel that the number of unfilled social work positions in this community does not adequately reflect the extent of the problem. The general unavailability of social workers results in restrictions on community planning for new services when it is known in advance that there is little chance of securing qualified personnel. Agency boards and lay people working on the community level are as aware as the profession of the critical shortage. In budget meetings for the United Givers Fund agencies, citizen committees are aware that year after year agencies turn back funds that they were unable to use because of unfilled positions. Thus our local family agency does not have a homemaker service, our juvenile court does not have trained social

CALIFORNIA STATE PERSONNEL BOARD

Psychiatric Specialty Sequence No Longer Required

The California State Personnel Board recently approved a change in the minimum qualifications for the nearly 500 psychiatric social work positions in the California state service. The psychiatric specialty sequence is no longer required. The minimum educational requirement for all of these positions is now stated as: completion of a two year graduate curriculum in social work in an approved school of social work.

Entrance Requirements for Psychiatric Social Work Positions in California

California residence is not required for these examinations.

Junior Psychiatric Social Worker

Completion of a two-year graduate curriculum in social work in a recognized school of social work.

(Candidates who are within six months of completing their second year of graduate work will be admitted to the examination, but they will not be appointed until they have completed the required education.)

Senior Psychiatric Social Worker

Either I

Experience: Two years of full-time paid experience in psychiatric social work; *and*

Education: Completion of a two-year graduate curriculum in social work in a recognized school of social work.

In appraising experience, more weight will be given to the breadth of pertinent experience and the evidence of the candidate's ability to accept and fulfill increasing responsibility than to the length of his experience.

Or II

One year of experience in the California state service as a Junior Psychiatric Social Worker.

workers. If there was a greater possibility of securing such qualified staff, there would be greater incentive to work toward such goals.

Even governmental agencies, with all the resources at their command, are being adversely affected. One governmental agency reports: "We have tried to find services of a consultant for the aged but, in salary range provided, we have not been able to find a person of requisite experience. The effect of our inability to fill this position will be felt nationally. The clients of our agencies in each of the states and territorial programs are the ultimate losers because they will not receive the full measure of service possible should this position have been filled."

Responsible observers of the student bodies annually enrolled in schools of social work have wondered whether the lower number of applicants to schools has resulted in a less qualitative student body. One community executive expressed his concern over the fact that the unavailability of qualified social workers has resulted in persons being employed who have paper qualifications but low efficiency records. In a tighter labor market, this executive feels, such people would be eliminated or would hold marginal positions. He wonders whether "behind this situation is the fact that there has been little opportunity for selectivity of applicants to schools of social work due to our recruitment failures and/or the relatively small group for selection."

Summary

In this report we have deliberately refrained from any excessive editorializing. The facts are eloquent and significant.

The data cited above and the experiences of the Committee on Careers in Social Work of the Council on Social Work Education, which has had the responsibility

to correlate and administer the recruiting program for social work for the past four years, would seem to lead to at least these generalizations:

1. The shortage of qualified social workers is severe and nation-wide.
2. The agencies have been adversely affected in the planning and administering of effective programs.
3. Personnel standards, because of greater work loads and the hiring of untrained or partially trained workers, have been weakened.
4. The community's health and welfare have been adversely affected because social service clients are served less adequately than in the past.
5. There is substantiation in the data of the thesis that the adequate provision of health and welfare services to the American people rests upon the bedrock of adequately educated professional personnel.

CORRECTION

The appointments listed in the October Issue of *Social Work Education* for the University of Pennsylvania should read Associate rather than Associate Professor for Saul Hofstein, George Hoshino, Harry Moore and Eloise Severinsson.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE

A Week-End Conference on the Problems Arising from the Teaching of Personality Development to Students of Education and Social Work will be held from March 28th to 30th, 1958. The conference is being sponsored by the University College of North Staffordshire in conjunction with the University of Oxford Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies at the University College of North Staffordshire,

NEW COUNCIL PUBLICATION

NEW APPROACHES TO ADMINISTRATION AND RESEARCH IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Table of Contents

ADMINISTRATION

Introduction - Laurin Hyde

Administration's Basic Concepts and the Social Work Curriculum - Edwin A. Bock

Discussion: What Progress Has Administration Made in Defining Its Basic Concepts for Incorporation in the Social Work Curriculum? - Wayne Vasey

RESEARCH

Introduction - Paul Schreiber

How Can the Basic Curriculum Foster Research-Mindedness and More Effective Utilization of the Research Approach? - Samuel Mencher

Discussion of: "How Can the Basic Curriculum Foster Research-Mindedness and More Effective Utilization of the Research Approach?" - Samuel Finestone

These papers were presented at the 84th Annual Forum of the National Conference of Social Work, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 1957.

#7-64-2, 50¢

Available January 15, 1958

tion of Cleveland, has informed the Council that a survey has been conducted to determine the number of non-practicing social workers in the community who might be stimulated to return to either part-time or full-time employment. The Committee located and contacted in Cuyahoga County 284 professionally trained, but non-practicing social workers. Approximately 1/3 of this total have indicated an interest in present or future employment and in keeping up with developments in the profession. Of immediate interest is the fact that 33 stated that they are now interested in regular and/or temporary part-time employment, their stated interest ranging from occasional work on special projects to regular work on about 1/2 time schedule. This is the first concrete step any local community has taken to mobilize this valuable source of potential womanpower.

Career Publications

Two articles, one entitled "Planning Your Career—in Social Work" and the other entitled "Career for Tomorrow—as a Social Worker," appeared in *Weekly News Review*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 8 and *American Observer*, Vol. XXVII, No. 7, respectively, during the month of October. Both of these publications are issued by the Civic Education Service, Inc. and the articles referred to were written by Anton Berle. The Council's recruitment mail has been notably increased by letters mentioning one or the other of these articles and indicating an interest in social work as a profession. Both articles state the case simply, factually, and, apparently from the mail response, interestingly.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Federation Employment and Guidance Service, 42 East 41st Street, New York 17, N. Y., is again centralizing

general counselor camp placement for all of the summer country and city day camps affiliated with the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York. The Camp Unit of the Service will be working with about 1,000 job openings and will start its interviewing for these openings on December 16, 1957.

The U. S. Department of Labor has announced an expanded and improved placement service for employers of professional workers. If a job opening for a professional worker cannot be filled by any of the 1,750 local State Employment Service offices in which it is filed, the information regarding that opening may be quickly dispatched to 67 specially designated and qualified local State Employment Service offices. These special centers will operate as a professional network on a nationwide basis.

NIMH APPOINTMENT

The National Institute of Mental Health, Training and Standards Branch, has appointed Miss Frances Marie McNabola as Training Specialist in psychiatric social work. Miss McNabola joins Dr. Milton Wittman in the NIMH office at Bethesda, Maryland.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST TO COUNCIL MEMBERS

Costs of Attending College - A Study of Student Expenditures and Sources of Income, Ernest V. Hollis and Associates, College and University Administration Branch, Division of Higher Education - Bulletin 1957, No. 9 - U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. 45¢.

Land of Choice, the Hungarians in Canada, John Kosa. University of Toronto Press, 1957, \$3.50.



SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION
BIMONTHLY NEWS PUBLICATION
COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION, INC.

JANE M. HOEY, PRESIDENT
ERNEST F. WITTE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MRS. JANICE L. GORN, EDITOR

